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THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST IN THE FORM OF A SERVANT,

BRIEFLY

Enquired into, and practically Improved; in a SERMON preached at the administration of the sacrament of the LORD's SUPPER.

WITH

A further Improvement of that MYSTERY, both as to FAITH and PRACTICE; preached after the administration of that ordinance.

BY

The late Reverend Mr THOMAS BOSTON,
Minister of the Gospel at *Ettrick*, Author of the Fourfold State.

1 TIM. iii. 16. *Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.*

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MDCCLV.

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST IN THE FORM OF A SERVANT, &c.

PHILIP. ii. 7.
AND TOOK UPON HIM THE FORM OF A SERVANT.

OUR holy religion, which hath its denomination from Jesus Christ, is a religion of Mysteries; mysteries of Faith, and mysteries of Practice, neither of which can one be let into, in a saving manner, without supernatural grace. The mysteries of Faith, mysteries to be Believed, do, All of them, lead unto Practice: yea, even these of them which are most Sublime, the more they are truly Believed, the more do they influence men to Holiness of heart and life. Wherefore the apostle, in the context, to press the Philippians unto the Practice of Moral Duties, particularly to Love their Neighbour as themselves, to lay out themselves to be Beneficial to Mankind, and for that end to deny Themselves, and Condescend to Others for their good; lays before them, to be Believed, that constellation of Mysteries appearing in the Incarnation of the Son of God: a motive to good Works, unknown to the Jewish Rabbies, and Greek Moralists; but sealed in the experience of believers, as the most powerful Incentive to universal Holiness.

In

In this verſe, whereof the text is a part, are three of theſe myſteries. The firſt, which is the leading one, is, That 'Chriſt Jeſus being in the form of God, not thinking 'it robbery to be equal with God, yet made himſelf of no 'reputation,' viz. for us. To 'be in the form of God,' is to be VERY God, having the Very nature and eſſence of God; the form being that which eſſentially diſtinguiſheth things, and makes a thing to be preciſely that which it is. And foraſmuch as this Form is, according to the apoſtle, the foundation of his Equality with God his Father; it can denote no leſs than his being VERY God: for no excellency whatſoever, really different from the divine Eſſence, can found an Equality with God; but ſtill there would remain as great a diſproportion as betwixt Finite and Infinite. Here then is a wonderful myſtery: Chriſt being very God, the Supreme, the moſt high God, equal with the Father, emptied himſelf of his divine glory, laying it aſide, namely, in point of Manifeſtation, caſting a veil, a thick veil, over it, for a time. The ſecond myſtery is, 'He took upon him 'the form of a ſervant.' Thus it was, that he Emptied himſelf. This Form, to wit of a Servant, was the veil he drew over his divine glory: for ſo the original words run, 'But emptied himſelf, taking the form of a ſervant.' The third myſtery is, 'He was made in the likeneſs of men.' In regard of the Sinfulneſs cleaving to mens nature, which he was abſolutely free of, he is ſaid to have been made, not in a Sameneſs with, but in the Likeneſs of, men; truly man in ſubſtance and nature, but without Sin, however Like to ſinful fleſh he appeared, Rom. viii. 3. 'God ſending his own 'Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh.' This was it that was prerequiſite unto, and qualified him for, taking upon him the Form of a Servant: for ſo ſtand the words in the original, 'Taking the form of a ſervant, being made in the likeneſs 'of men.'

'Tis the ſecond of theſe myſteries, 'And took upon him 'the form of a ſervant,' which I am to inſiſt upon. And two things here are to be opened; namely, 'What the 'form of a ſervant is.' And 'What Chriſt's taking it upon 'him bears.' I begin with the latter of theſe.

Whatever is more particularly meant by the 'form of a 'ſervant,' it is plain, that in the general it muſt denote a mean

mean and low condition. And our Lord's 'taking it upon 'him,' imports two things; 1. That he voluntarily and of his own free choice submitted to it, for the sake of poor sinners. He was not Originally in the form of a Servant, as some men have been, who were born in a state of servitude; nay, he was from eternity the Son of God, his Father's Equal: but he, being Lord of heaven and earth, came, of his own accord, under the form of a Servant. It was not laid upon him against his will; but he freely took it on him self, and became Bound, when he might have continued Free. 2. It imports, That what he was Before, namely, Very God, equal with the Father, he still Continued to be, notwithstanding of his submitting to the form of a Servant. He 'took upon him the form of a servant;' that is, continuing in the form of God, he took upon him the form of a Servant.

By the 'form of a servant,' is not understood the 'like-'ness of a guilty man.' That exposition weakens the force of the apostle's argument, and the force of that important term, 'the form of God;' tho' indeed the thing itself is truth, and is taught in the last clause of the verse. Neither is it to be understood of Man's Nature, which in respect of God is Servile: because Christ's Emptying of himself, consisting, according to the text, in his Taking on the form of a servant, was surely over, and at an end, in his exaltation, and the full manifestation of his divine glory; while yet his Human Nature remains. Neither doth that Mean, Low and Servile kind of Condition, into which he was brought in his sufferings, seem to explain sufficiently the 'form of a servant,' which he took upon himself.

The plain and literal sense of these words I take to be the true sense of them, *viz.* That the Son of God, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, Really became a servant, as really as ever man did, who served for his bread. He voluntarily took upon himself, That wherein the essence of that relation, on the Servant's part, doth consist; and so was formally constitute a Servant, to all intents and purposes of the bargain with him whose servant he became. As this is the Literal sense of the words, from which we are never to depart without necessity; so it is confirmed to be the Genuine sense, by the true import of that phrase, 'Being in

'the form of God.' His 'being in the form of God,' denotes his being Very God: therefore his taking upon him the form of a servant, must denote his becoming Really a Servant.

Now, the scripture represents Jesus Christ, (1.) As a servant in his state of Humiliation, and so he is called, 'A 'servant of Rulers, Isa. xlix. 7. (2.) As a servant in his state of Exaltation, Isa. liii. 11. 'By his knowledge 'shall my righteous Servant justify many. Compare Acts v. 31. 'Him hath God exalted with his right-hand 'to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance 'to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.' It can hardly be a question with any who reads the text and context, whether the form of a Humbled Servant, or of an Exalted Servant, is meant here? Our Lord Jesus did take on both, the one in his Humiliation, and the other in his exaltation: but 'tis evident, the former, and not the latter, is here meant; and they are vastly different. The form of a Humbled Servant he submitted to; the form of an Exalted Servant was conferred on him, as the reward of that submission, Philip. ii. 9. In This form of a servant, he has a most exalted and glorious honorary Ministry; being a Servant, for whose 'law the isles shall wait, Isa. xlii. 1, 4. 'For 'the Father—hath committed all Judgment unto the Son,' John v. 22. hath 'Set him King upon his holy hill of Zion,' Psal. ii. 6. and 'given him all power in heaven and in earth,' Matth. xxviii. 18. But in That form, whereof the text speaks, he had a Service low and humble, onerous and heavy, a surety service, a Servitude: and so the form was the form of a Bond-servant; in both the one and the other, Joseph was a shining type of him, being first 'sold 'for a servant,' and then exalted to be ruler over all Egypt under Pharaoh.

Here then is a stupenduous mystery: Christ Jesus, very God, the Father's equal, Lord of heaven and earth, became a Servant for us, a Bond-man or Bond-servant; for so the word properly signifies, and therefore is the word that is constantly used in that new-testament phrase which we read 'bond or free,' or 'bond and free,' 1 Cor. xii. 13. Gal. iii. 28. Eph. vi. 8. Col. iii. 11. Rev. xiii. 16. and xix. 18. The greatest Inequality found in any relation among

mong men, is in that betwixt th Master and the Servant, the Bond-servant: so the lowest Levelling among them is that whereof mention is made, Isa. xxiv. 2. 'It shall be— 'as with the servant, so with his master.' Then, what unparallel'd condescension, wonderful emptying was this! God's Equal becoming a Servant, a Bond-servant for poor sinners! Both these characters, the Highest and the Lowest, met together in Christ, in his state of humiliation, Zech. xiii. 7. 'Awake, O sword,—against the man that is my fellow, 'saith the Lord.' Isa. xlii. 1. 'Behold my servant;' the very same word that is rendred Bond-man and Bond-servant. Lev. xxv. 39, 42, 44.

DOCT. 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, continuing to be his 'Father's Equal, humbled himself into a state of Servitude, 'and became his Servant, his Bond-servant, in man's na- 'ture, for poor sinners of Adam's race.' This was a step lower than his becoming Man: but the lower it was, the higher did his free love to man appear.

I am aware, that some in the height of their own wisdom, measuring gospel-mysteries by their carnal reason, may be apt to say here, 'This is a hard saying, who can hear it? But 'tis undeniable that Christ is expressly called God's servant in the holy scripture, as Isa. xlii. 1. 'Behold my Ser- 'vant whom I uphold, &c. compared with Matth. xii. 18. where that text is directly applied to him, Zech. iii. 8. 'I will 'bring forth my Servant the BRANCH.' But what kind of a Servant unto his Father was he? did he become a Bond-man, a Bond-servant? Yea, he did. Hear his own decision in that point, Psal. xl. 6. 'Sacrifice and offering 'thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened.' The word, here render'd Opened, properly signifies Digged, as you may see in the margin: and so the words are, 'Mine 'ears thou diggedst thorow;' that is, Boredst, as 'tis well express'd in our paraphrase of the psalms in metre, 'Mine 'ears thou bored.' This plainly hath a view to that law concerning the Bond-servant, Exod. xxi. 6. 'Then his ma- 'ster shall bring him unto the judges, he shall also bring him 'to the door, or unto the door-post: and his master shall 'bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him 'for ever.' This is confirmed from Hos. iii. 2. 'So I 'bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver,' which was

the half of the ſtated price of a Bond-woman. In the original it is, 'So I digged her thorow to me, &c.' the ſame word being here uſed, as Pſal. xl. 6. 'Tis a pregnant word, which is virtually two in ſignification: and the ſenſe is, I bought her, and bored her ear to my door-poſt, to be my Bond-woman, according to the law, Deut. xv. 17. 'Thou 'ſhalt take an awl, and thurſt it through his ear into the 'door, and he ſhall be thy ſervant for ever: and alſo unto 'thy maid-ſervant thou ſhalt do likewiſe.' The boring of her ear as a Bond-woman was noways inconſiſtent with the prophet's Betrothing of her to himſelf, Hoſ. iii. 3. ſee Exod. xxi. 8.

I ſhall only add, That, accordingly, his moſt precious life, which was the ranſom for the lives of the whole elect world, was Sold by Judas for thirty pieces of ſilver, the ſtated price of the life of a Bond-ſervant, Exod. xxi. 32. 'If the ox 'ſhall puſh a man-ſervant, or maid-ſervant, he ſhall give un- 'to their maſter thirty ſhekels of ſilver, and the ox ſhall be 'ſtoned.' And the death he was put to, namely, to die on a Croſs, was a Roman puniſhment, called by them the Servile Puniſhment, or puniſhment of Bond-ſervants: becauſe it was the death that Bond-men malefactors were ordinarily doom'd unto; free men ſeldom, if ever, according to law. And 'tis plain, that 'Joſeph who was ſold for a 'ſervant,' (Pſal. cv. 17.) was therein a type of Chriſt.

Now, for the opening of this myſtery of the ſtate of Servitude the Lord of glory put himſelf into for wretched ſinners of Adam's race, we ſhall briefly conſider the following particulars; (1.) To whom he became a ſervant. (2.) For whom. (3.) The neceſſity of it. (4.) The contract of ſervice. (5.) His fulfilling of it. (6.) Wherefore he engaged in it.

I. 'To whom he became a ſervant.' The Son of God, in our nature, became a Servant to man's great Lord and Maſter. He put himſelf in a ſtate of Servitude to his Father, who ſaid unto him, 'Thou art my Servant,' Iſa. xlix. 3. 'Twas with his Father he entred into the contract of Service: He it was that bored his Ears, Pſal. xl. 6. It was his Father's Buſineſs he was employed in, Luke ii. 49. and to him he behoved to work, John ix. 4. 'I muſt work 'the

'the works him that sent me.' So, howbeit our Lord Jesus was and is, in respect of his Divine nature, the Father's Equal; yet, in that respect, he acknowledgeth the Father Greater than he, as the Lord is greater than the Servant, John xiv. 28. 'My Father is greater than I.' Compare chap. xiii. 16. 'The servant is not greater than his lord, 'neither he that is sent, greater than he that sent him.'

Christ is indeed called 'a servant of rulers,' Isa. xlix. 7. But not in respect of the Prime servile relation he stood in; that relation he bore to his Father only: But in regard of a Secondary occasional relation; as when a master obligeth his servant to serve another man in a particular piece of business. Thus our Lord Jesus was, by his Father, subjected to the Jewish and Roman rulers: he paid tribute, and was by them both treated as a Servant. But Herein he was still about his Father's business.

II. 'For whom he became a servant.' Our blessed Lord Jesus took on the service For and Instead of others, who were bound to it, but utterly unable for it. The cup is found in Benjamin's sack; therefore poor Benjamin, his father's darling, must be kept a Bond-man in Egypt: Nay, says Judah, 'Let me abide instead of the lad, a bond-man to 'my lord, and let Benjamin go,' Gen. xliv. 33. An elect world is found guilty before the Lord; they must therefore be bond-men for ever, as well as the rest of mankind: Nay, Father, saith our Lord, who 'sprang out of Judah,' That yoke will be utterly insupportable to them, they'll undoubtedly be ruined and perish for ever under it; I'll take their state of servitude upon me, let That yoke be laid on My neck, let Me be thy Bond-man in their stead; and let them go free. So be it, said God, who had set his electing love on them from eternity, I'm well-pleased with the exchange: Thou then 'art my Servant, O Israel, in whom I 'will be glorified,' Isa. xlix. 3. As to which words, 'tis evident from the Context, that Christ is the party therein spoke to. By Israel is meant the spiritual Israel, to wit, the Elect of mankind. Compare Rom ix. 6. 'They are 'not all Israel, who are of Israel.' The former text stands thus precisely in the original, 'Thou art my servant; Israel, 'in whom I will glorify myself.' As if the Father had said

to

to Christ, Son, these are utterly unable to make out their service; for, their work arm being broken by the fall, I cannot expect a good turn off Their hand: be it known then, that it is agreed, that I take Thee in Their room and place, to perform the Service due in virtue of the Original contract; Thou in their stead 'art my servant,' from whose hand I'll look for That service: Thou art Israel's Representive, in whom I will glorify myself, and make all mine attributes illustrious; as I was dishonoured, and they darkened, by Israel the Collective Body of the elect. So it was for the Elect Christ became a Servant.

III. 'The necessity of his becoming a servant for their 'salvation.' No doubt all mankind might have been left to perish, even as the fallen angels, without any the least imputation of injustice, either on the Father, or on the Son. The saving of Any of the lost race of Adam was not a necessary act, which could not have been left undone; but an act of sovereign free grace. Howbeit, on the supposition that God would have an elect company saved, there was a necessity of Christ's taking upon himself the State of Servitude for them. This will appear from the following particulars jointly considered.

1. The elect of God were, with the rest of Mankind, constitute God's hired Servants by the first covenant, the covenant of works; and actually entred to That their service, in their head the first Adam. And, in Token of this, we are all naturally inclined in that character to deal with God; tho' by the fall we are rendred incapable to perform the duty of it, Luke xv. 19. 'Make me as one of thy 'hired servants.' The Work they were to work was perfect obedience to the holy law: the Hire they were to have for their work was Life; 'The man which doth these things 'shall live by them,' Rom. x. 15. The Penalty of breaking away from their master was perpetual Bondage under the curse, Gal. iii. 10. 'Cursed is every one that continu-'eth not in all things, which are written in the book of the 'law, to do them.'

2. Howbeit they never made out their Service: But, by the time they were well entred home, they, thro' the solicitation of the great runaway servant the devil, violated their

their 'covenant of service,' and brake away from their Lord and Master. So they lost all Plea for the Hire; and justly became Bond-men under the Curse of the broken covenant of works, liable to be whipt to their work, and, for their malefices, to die the death of Slaves, Gal. iv. 24. 'These 'are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, 'which gendereth to bondage.' Their falling under the curse inferr'd the loss of their Liberty, and constituted them Bond-men for ever; as is evident from the nature of the thing, and instances of the Cursed in other cases, as Gen. ix. 25. 'Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants 'shall he be.' Josh. ix. 23. 'Now therefore ye (the Gi-'beonites) are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed 'from being bond-men.' The very Ground being cursed (Gen. iii. 17.) falls under Bondage, according to the scripture, Rom. viii. 21. Compare Gal. iii. 13. 'Cursed is every 'one that hangeth on a tree;' which hath a special respect to dying on a Cross, the capital punishment for Bond men.

3. By the breaking of that covenant, they lost all their ability for their service, and were left without Strength, Rom. v. 6. They had no Suffering strength to bear the punishment of their breaking away from their service; but they must have for ever perished under it. They had no Doing or Working strength left them; their work-arm, once sufficient for their service, was now quite broken, so that they could work none at all to any good purpose: nay, they had neither hand nor heart for their work again, Rom. viii. 7. 'The carnal mind——is not subject to the law of 'God, neither indeed can be.' So it was not Possible for Them to make out their service, Josh. xxiv. 19. 'Ye can-'not serve the Lord.'

4. Howbeit, the punishment due unto them, for breaking away from their service, behoved to be born; and the service itself behoved to be made out, according to the original contract, the covenant of works; else they could never have life and salvation. The truth of God insur'd this, Gen. ii. 17. 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt 'surely die.' The honour of God's holy law and covenant required it, Isa. xlii. 21. 'He will magnify the law, and 'make it honourable.' And his exact Justice confirmed it,

Gen.

Gen. xxviii. 15. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do 'right?'

Laſtly, Since all this behoved to be done, and they could not do it; the Miſery of Servitude behoved to be Born, and they were not able to bear it; the Service behoved to be Fulfilled, and they could by no means work it out: it was therefore abſolutely neceſſary for their life and ſalvation, that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould come under the Curſe due to them, take on himſelf their Form, put himſelf in the room of the poor Bond-man, enter home to the Service in their ſtead, and fully ſerve it out for them, transferring on himſelf their ſtate of ſervitude, Gal. iii. 13. 'Chriſt hath redeemed us 'from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us: 'For it is written, curſed is every one that hangeth on a 'tree.' Chap. iii. 3, 4, 5. 'We——were in bondage 'under the elements of the world: But—God ſent forth 'his Son—made under the law, to redeem them that were 'under the law.'

IV. 'The contract of the ſervice.' It is the Covenant of grace, made between the Father and Chriſt, the ſecond Adam, repreſenting all the elect his ſpiritual ſeed. The covenant of Grace is juſtly looked upon as a Covenant of ſervice, ſtrictly and properly ſo called; wherein ſo much work is to be done for ſo much wages. But 'tis a lamentable abuſe of the covenant of grace, by Legaliſts in their principles, and many of the communicants in their practice, that they put the work, for earning of the wages, in the wrong hand; namely, That they ſhall be the Workers, and eternal life the Hire of Their work. This is to trample under foot God's covenant of grace, and to make a new one of our own, which he will never approve of. Heaven's device in this caſe was, that Chriſt ſhould be the worker for life and ſalvation to poor ſinners; and that they ſhould get life and ſalvation, thro' him, by free grace; and ſo work from life and ſalvation received, as ſons entitled to the inheritance antecedently to all their working, Rom. vi. 23. 'For the wages of ſin is death: But the gift of God is 'eternal life through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.' Chap. iv. 4. 5. 'Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of 'grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but 'believeth

'believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is 'counted for righteousness.' So the covenant of grace was, in respect of Christ, a Covenant of service in the strictest sense; and the reward is of Debt to him, and him only, as the servant that worked for it, according to the covenant: and none but he was fit for that service.

Here consider, 1. This contract of service was Entred into from eternity, Tit. i. 2. 'In hope of eternal life which 'God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.' The covenant, by which salvation is to be had, is not a covenant of yesterday, or of to-day, now to be made by us: it was made in every point thereof before the world was. What remains for us is to take hold of it by faith. 2. The Design of it was, (1.) To illustrate the divine glory, much darkned by the hired servants of God's own house. There was, by sin, an invasion made upon God's Declarative Glory and honour, and Jesus Christ was chosen to make the reparation. So, whatever wrong was done to the sovereignty, justice, holiness, and goodness of God, or any other the divine perfections, by the sin of those in whose room he stood; 'tis laid upon him to repair it, Isa. xlix. 3. (2.) To save lost sinners; to restore the Israel of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, to life and favour, Isa. xlix. 6. God had set his love from eternity on a select company of mankind: they were lost, ruined and undone, and they must be saved: And Jesus Christ enters into his father's Service for that effect. 3. The Service, which in this contract he undertook to perform, was, to fulfil the whole law for them; fully to answer, in their room and stead, the demands which the broken covenant of works, the original contract, had upon them, Hebr. x. 9. 'Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy 'will, O God.' Thus the parts of the service were these two; (1.) His bearing the Punishment which they, as breakers of the law, were bound to underly in virtue of the Penalty of the covenant of works. And hereby he was to satisfy the penalty of that covenant, the law's sanction of death. (2.) His performing the Obedience, which they were still bound to fulfil, by the same covenant of works, tho' broken. And hereby he was to satisfy the commanding part of that covenant, requiring perfect obedience for life, Gal. iv. 4, 5. 'God sent forth his Son—made under

'the law, to redeem them that were under the law. Chap.' 'iii. 13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the 'law, being made a curse for us.' Mat. iii. 15. 'Thus it 'becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.' 4. The covenanted Reward of the service was a glorious exaltation to himself, and eternal life for them. Of the former the apostle makes mention, Phil. ii. 9. 'Wherefore God also hath 'highly exalted him. Of the latter, Tit i. 2. 'In hope 'of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised be-'fore the world began.'

V. 'The fulfilling of the service, according to his con-'tract.' It was a hard service; but he went through with it; 'became obedient unto death, even the death of the 'cross,' Phil. ii. 8. And herein three things are to be considered;

1. He Entred to his service, in his being conceived and born holy for them; so bringing a holy human nature into the world with him, which he retained unspotted to the end. Thus he answered the demand the law had on them, for Original Holiness, holiness of nature, as a condition of life, Isa. ix. 6. 'Unto us (or for us,' chap. vi. 8.) a child is 'born: even that holy thing,' Luke i. 35. That this was a piece of the service he performed for them, and was indeed his entring to his service, appears by comparing Psal. xl. 6. 'Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears 'hast thou opened, Heb. digged through;' with Hebr. x. 5. 'Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast 'thou prepared me.' Where the Digging Through, or boring of his ears to God's door-post in the room and stead of the elect, is expounded of 'preparing him a body,' a human nature.

2. He Went on in his service in the righteousnesse of his life, being 'obedient even unto death,' Phil. ii. 8. All that he did in the space of about thirty three years he lived upon earth was working the work of his service, to the fulfilling of the whole law in its commands; which was that work wherein the first Adam failed, and so ruined all mankind. And thus the great Surety-servant answered the demand the law had on the elect, for perfect Righteousness of conversation, as the condition of life, John xvi. 4. 'I have glorified thee

'on

' on the earth: I have finished the work thou gavest me to ' do.'

Lastly, Having suffered all his life long, in which he was ' a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,' he completed and finished his service in his death and burial; thus answering for them the law's demand of Satisfaction for sin, John xix. 30 ' When Jesus therefore had received the ' vinegar, he said, It is finished: And he bowed his head, ' and gave up the Ghost.' The term of his continuance in this state of servitude was, according to the covenant, till death, but no longer. This account of the matter he himself gives us, John ix. 4. ' I must work the works of him ' that sent me, while it is Day: The night' (viz. of death) ' cometh when no man can work.' He was to Serve during all the Days of his life; that is, in the language of the law, for Ever, Exod. xxi. 6. ' His master shall bore his ear through ' with an awl, and he shall serve him for ever,' i. e. till death. In common cases the law made an exception here of a Jubile interveening: but in the case of the great Bond-servant, the Lord of glory, there was no such exception; nor could there be, in regard the true Jubile was to be brought about by his death. Howbeit, in the grave ' the ' servant is free from his master,' Job iii. 19. So, having served out his full time, There he put off the form of a Servant: And he ' rose and revived, that he might be Lord ' both of the dead and living,' Rom. xiv. 9.

VI. and lastly, ' Wherefore he put himself into, and ' took on him, this state of servitude.'

1. Love to his Father, and the love he had to his designed Spouse the captive daughter of Zion, and to his Children the spiritual seed, engaged him to undertake it; as in the case of the servant under the law, Exod. xxi. 5. ' I ' love my master, my wife and my children, I will not go ' out free.' He saw that his Father would entirely lose his service from all mankind, if he did not in their nature take the service on himself; the whole tribe of Adam, from the least to the greatest, being utterly disabled for it. Wherefore, for his Father's glory, the honour of his holy law, his justice and his mercy, he ' took on him the form of a ser- ' vant, being made in the likeness of men.' The captive

daughter of Zion, his Father's choice, and his own choice, for a ſpouſe to him, he could not have, but, as Jacob had Rachel, by ſerving for her, as unlovely and unſightly as ſhe was. But he loved her freely, he loved her infinitely; and, becauſe he ſo loved, he 'took on the form of a ſervant' for her, and, as the true 'Iſrael, ſerved for a wife,' Hoſ. xii. 12. He loved his children, the ſpiritual ſeed, the elect given him of his Father: notwithſtanding of all the burden cleaving to them, he would not quit them: he ſaw they would be loſt, if he ſhould Go out from them Free; therefore he conſented to the Boring of his Ears, to Serve all the days of his life upon the earth.

2. He took it on him, for Releaſing of them from that State of ſervitude or bondage which their father Adam, by his miſmanagement, had brought himſelf and all mankind into. What Judah offered to do, in the caſe of Benjamin his brother, Gen. xliv. 33. Chriſt really performed in the caſe of his brethren, becoming a Bond-man in their ſtead, that they might be free. They were in Bondage under the law, under the curſe of the broken covenant of works; and they could never, by all their own doings and ſufferings, have work'd themſelves out of their Bondage; but had periſh'd in it, had not he put himſelf into their room and ſtead.

3. He did it for paying of their debt. The law, in ſome caſes, allowed parents to ſell their children for paying of their debt. Hence the Lord ſaith unto Iſrael, 'Which 'of my creditors is it to whom I have ſold you?' Iſa. l. 1. Thereby ſhewing, that it was not to him, but to themſelves, their ruin was owing. We have a ſtory to this purpoſe of one of the ſons of the prophets, who was a holy man, but had died in debt: 'Tis thus related by his poor widow, 2 Kin. iv. 1 'Thy ſervant my husband is dead, and thou 'knoweſt that thy ſervant did fear the Lord: And the 'creditor is come to take unto him my two ſons to be 'bond-men.' Thus ſtood the caſe with the elect. Their father Adam, who ruined his own family, had brought a burden of debt on them, as well as on the reſt of his children; he had left them under a double debt, a debt of Obedience, and a debt of Puniſhment, which they were utterly unable to pay. And juſtice, as the Creditor, was

come

come to take them away for Bond-men, and force them to Serve for payment of the debt, never to be releaſed till the laſt farthing of it was fully ſerved for: but Chriſt ſaid, O juſtice, allow Them to ſtay, and take Me for a Bond-man in their ſtead; if the ſervice for payment of the debt ly on them, they'll periſh under it, and the debt will never be paid out: but I'll Serve for them. It was accepted: and the Lord Jeſus took their room, and went away with the Creditor for a Bond-man in their ſtead.

Laſtly, He took on him the form of a Servant, to bring them into a ſtate of adoption in the family of God. He become a Bond-ſervant, that they might become ſons and daughters. This the apoſtle plainly teacheth, Gal. iv. 1. 'The heir as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a 'ſervant'- ver. 3. Even ſo we—were in bondage.'—ver. 4. 'But—God ſent forth his Son made of a woman, made 'under the law, ver. 5. To redeem them that were under 'the law, that we might receive the adoption of ſons.'

Use I. What is ſaid may ſerve for Convincing, awakning, and alarming of ſinners who are ſtrangers to Jeſus Chriſt, whether they be profane perſons, or formal hypocrites. Being yet in your natural ſtate, not united to Chriſt; ye are in a ſtate of bondage, there is a terrible and heavy yoke wreathed about your necks, from which ye are not able to deliver yourſelves. Ye are Bond-men under the law: And ſo,

1. It lyes upon you, to perform and fulfil the ſervice man was bound to by the covenant of works, even to give perfect obedience to the law, under the pain of the curſe: for to you it ſaith, Rom. iii. 19. 'Curſed is every one that con-'tinueth not in all things, which are written in the book of 'the law, to do them.' Now ye are utterly unable for this, and ſhall as ſoon remove theſe mountains as perform it: therefore ye can never be ſaved, while ye are out of Chriſt. Behold, in Chriſt's taking on him the form of a Servant, how that Service behoved of neceſſity to be performed, according to the law, ere one ſinner could be ſaved. And if God did ſo ſtand upon the honour of his law with his own Son, that he behoved completely to fulfil that ſervice for thoſe whom he ſhould ſave; 'tis vain for you to ſlight Chriſt,

Chriſt, and think that God will grant an abatement of that ſervice to you. Nay, as matters ſtand betwixt God and you, if you obey not perfectly, you do nothing to purpoſe: no leſs can be accepted off your hand, ſince ye are not in Chriſt by faith.

2. It lyes upon you to bear the puniſhment due to you for breaking away from God your Lord and maſter; according to the threatning, Gen. ii. 17. "In the day thou eat-"eſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die." All that ye can ſuffer in this world will not be a ſufficient compenſation for the wrong thereby done to the honour of an infinite God: nay, ye ſhall never be able, through the ages of eternity, to exhauſt that puniſhment, and get from under it. None leſs than he, who was in the form of God, and equal with God, was able to go through it: therefore the Son of God took on him the form of a ſervant, that therein he might bear it, and bear it away from all that believe. A certain proof that none out of Chriſt ſhall eſcape it.

Conſider then, I beſeech you, what ye are doing: and ſee here, how preciſely God ſtands to his having the Service, owing him in virtue of the firſt covenant, fully made out: that, rather than any ſhould be ſaved without its being fulfilled, he would have his own Son to take on him the form of a Servant, and fulfil it for them.

USE II. Let all be exhorted to flee to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and, by faith, to embrace him, and the Service performed by him, as their only plea for life and ſalvation. Here's a myſtery of faith; 'Chriſt took upon him the form 'of a Servant,' propoſed to be believed and applied by each one in particular to himſelf, for ſalvation. And ſurely it will be good tidings,

1. To the poor broken hearted ſinner, who ſees he cannot ſerve the Lord according to the demand of the law, but one way or other mars every piece of work he takes in hand; who is out of conceit with his own beſt doings, becauſe they are ſo ill done. There's a ſervice performed by the Mediator for ſinners, that is perfect even in the eye of the law. 'Tis done, 'tis completed, and life and ſalvation is thereby gained for all that ſhall believe.

2. To ſuch as are under the terror of the threatnings and curſe of the holy law, for their running away from God's

God's service, and the dishonour they have done to the great Master. Here's the way of peace and reconciliation, by which ye may return to him as a Father; even thro' his own Son, who, for sinners, 'took upon him the form of a 'Servant,' and finished his work.

Jesus Christ, with his Service, and all the benefits thereof, is offered unto you this day: refuse him not, but take him as exhibited unto you in the gospel-offer. Take him for your righteousness, in which you'll stand before the Lord; take him for your treasure, out of which all your debt shall be paid; take him for your work, from whence alone your righteousness shall arise for your justification before the Lord; take him for your Husband, head, and Lord: take him for your All in all. Take himself, and his Service shall be imputed to you; his state of servitude, which is now over, shall make thee a son or daughter of God's family: in him thou shalt be 'received for ever, not now as a Servant, but 'above a servant; as Paul speaks in the case of Onesimus, a runaway Bond-servant, Philem. 15, 16. So shall you get both heart and hand for working good works, works truly good; as children working to their father, having the inheritance secured to them before, by the works of their elder brother.

Object. 1. 'But will ever Christ make me partaker of the be-'nefits of this service, who have served my lusts, instead of ser-'ving him?' Ans. Christ became not a Bond-servant, but for those who were in Bondage to sin and Satan: and it was the very end for which he took on him the form of a servant, that, by communicating to them the benefits of his Service, he might deliver them from the service of sin, and cause them to serve him, Luke i. 74. 'That we being de-'livered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve 'him.' Doubt not, then, but that, coming to him, ye shall be partakers of the benefits of his Service, to all intents and purposes of salvation: and particularly, that ye may be no more Bond-servants under sin, but honorary Servants to himself, whatever ye have been heretofore. 'For we 'ourselves also were sometimes—serving divers lusts and 'pleasures, Tit. iii. 3. And such were some of you: but 'ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified

'in

'in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our 'God.'

OBJECT. 2. 'I fear I am none of these in whose room 'and stead Christ took on him the form of a Servant: How 'then can I embrace him, and apply his Service to me, by 'believing? Ans. Your right to take him, and apply his service to yourself by believing, doth not at all depend on that matter, which is a secret not to be known by you till ye do believe; but it depends on the offer of Christ, his service which he served, and righteousness which he thereby wrought, made to you in the gospel of God, Rev. xxii. 17. 'Who-'soever will, let him take the water of life freely.' Howbeit Christ took on him the form of a Servant, only in the name and stead of the elect; yet a slain Saviour, a crucified Jesus, having fulfilled the Bond-service, is the ordinance of God for life and salvation unto all; that whosoever of all Adam's race 'believeth in him, should not perish, but have ever-'lasting life,' John iii. 16. And his Service or Righteousness is a Gift made over in the gospel to all the hearers of it; so as 'tis lawful for them, and every one of them, to take possession of it by believing. Hence, according to the Apostle, to believe is to 'receive the abundance of grace, 'and of the gift of righteousness,' Rom. v. 17. And this is so certain, that ye must either receive it and be saved; or be held, in the court of heaven, refusers of heaven's gift of righteousness made to you, and so perish for ever with a double destruction, Mark xvi. 16. 'He that believeth 'and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not, 'shall be damned.'

USE last. O Christians, communicants, come to the Lord's table with the faith and admiration of this stupendous mystery, 'Christ in the form of a Bond-servant for you.' See it in the exact justice of God, the invaluable price of your salvation from sin and wrath, and the strongest motive to the obedience of Sons. And let the faith of it fill your hearts with love to him, who so loved us; with repentance, and kindly sorrow for your sin, which brought God's equal so very low; with thankfulness for this unspeakable benefit; and with holy purposes of new obedience.

The end of the action-sermon.

THE CONTINUATION OF THE IMPROVEMENT.

THIS doctrine of Christ's state of servitude is too fruitful, both in point of faith and practice, to be dismissed without further improvement: therefore I shall now endeavour to improve it for your further instruction, and for exciting to the practice of holiness.

FIRST, This doctrine discovers the Ground and Reason of several other gospel-truths, which spring from it as a Root-Principle. And, among these, I shall take notice of the following particulars;

1. Here is a clear ground, upon which the dead elect, incapable by any work or doing of their own, to make themselves to differ from others, are, in a consistency with God's impartial justice, Quickned and endowed with saving faith, while others remain dead about them; quickning grace coming on them 'as a dew from the Lord, as showers upon 'the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the 'sons of men,' Micah v. 7. Our Lord Jesus having, in their name, taken on him the form of a Bond-servant, did, in their room and stead, perform the service required of them by the broken covenant of works, the original contract of service; but he did not perform that service in the room and stead of others. Hence, tho' not to others, yet to them is given Life, as the reward of the service performed for them by the second Adam; even as their life was lost thro' the marring of that service in the hands of the first Adam. 'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made 'alive,' 1 Cor. xv. 22. i. e. As all Adam's natural seed die, by his breaking off from the service; so all Christ's spiritual seed shall be made alive by his fulfilling it for them. And now that the Lord Jesus, having finished his Service by his death and burial, is risen again to be 'Lord of the

'dead and of the living;' how can they miſs of being quickned, each one in his time, ſince he lives, to ſee that the Life, for which he ſerved a hard Service, be made forthcoming to them, according to the contract of Service he entred into with his father? 'Becauſe he lives, they ſhall 'live alſo.'

2. Here is a clear ground, upon which the Obedience of the Man Chriſt may be imputed to believers for righteouſneſs, as well as his ſatisfaction by ſuffering: notwithſtanding Obedience was due from the human nature of Chriſt as a creature. For 'tis evident, that Chriſt's obeying his Father in the character of a Bond-ſervant (which is it that is imputed to us for righteouſneſs) could no more be Due, antecedently to his Contract of Service, than his ſatisfaction by ſuffering.

3. Here is the ground, upon which believers in Chriſt come to be juſtified before God; not upon the account of any thing wrought In them, or any work or deed done By them, whether the grace of faith itſelf, their act of believing, or any goſpel-obedience of theirs whatſoever, imputed to them for righteouſneſs, but upon the account of Chriſt's Service, allenarly, imputed to them for their Whole and Only righteouſneſs in the ſight of God, according to the Apoſtle's deſire, that he might 'be found in him, not ha-'ving his own righteouſneſs—but that which is through the 'faith of Chriſt,' Philip. iii. 9. For in the ſecond covenant there was a Transferring on him their ſtate of ſervitude, under which they ſtood bound to make out the Service, which was the Condition of life: accordingly He wrought the work, and fulfilled the ſervice for life, in their name and ſtead, both in the Doing and Suffering part of it. Now, they being United to him by faith, his righteouſneſs ariſing from that Service becomes theirs, and ſo is juſtly imputed to them. And ſince a holy juſt God inſiſted to have his Service, according to the original contract, fulfilled for life and ſalvation to poor ſinners, and Jeſus Chriſt was the Servant who did that work, not they; it cannot be, that any thing elſe whatſoever ſhould be imputed to them for righteouſneſs, but Chriſt's Service, which he himſelf ſerved, and for the performing of which he took upon him the form of a Bond-ſervant, Rom. iii. 22, 24. 'Even the righteouſneſs of God,

'which

'which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all 'them that believe.——Being justified freely by his grace, 'through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.' 2 Cor. v. 21. 'For he made him to be sin for us, who knew 'no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God 'in him.' 'Tis to his bearing the Punishment due to the runaway servants, we owe the pardon of all our sins; and to the Obedience given by him only, we owe our acceptance, as positively righteous in the sight of God.

4. Here is a clear and solid ground upon which believers in Christ are delivered from the Covenant of works; or delivered from the Law, considered as that covenant. For that broken Covenant being so far ingrossed in the Covenant with the second Adam, as that, from It, the service he was to perform in Their room and stead was stated in all the parts thereof, it plainly follows, that the Service being fully performed by him accordingly for them, and being really become theirs by faith, they are wholly delivered from that covenant: so that it can demand no more service of them, than a master can demand of a servant, who, in the person of another by him accepted, has served out his time, and so hath a right to the full hire, Rom. vii. 4. 'Wherefore, 'my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the 'body of Christ.' John viii. 36. 'If the Son therefore 'shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.'

5. Here is the ground upon which believers are no more Bond-servants, to work for life and salvation, to get it by their own works; but advanced to the dignity of Sons, and to serve as sons, to whom the inheritance belongs in virtue of their relation to their father. For since the Lord Jesus Christ took on him the form of a Bond-servant for them; and, having finished that Service in their stead, became Free again: they, being united to Christ by faith, can no longer remain Bond-servants; it being the very end of Christ's becoming a Bond-servant, to set them Free. This is their right and privilege before the Lord; howbeit, thro' the weakness of their faith, they often serve the Lord as Bond-men. And since it was the Son of God, the Father's equal, who Served in the character of a Bond-servant for them, they are, by the merit of that service, advanced to be sons of the house of heaven. From this ground it is that

the Apostle draws that conclusion concerning every believer, Gal. iv. 7. 'Wherefore thou art no more a servant, (i. e. a Bond-servant) but a son.' Compare the preceeding six verses of that chapter.

6. Here is the ground upon which believers are set beyond the reach of the Curse, are freed from the Guilt of Eternal or Revenging Wrath, and can never for shorter or longer time fall under Condemnation; howbeit their sins make them liable to all the effects of God's Fatherly anger. For Christ taking on him the form of a Bond-servant for them, bore all the Curse, revenging Wrath, and Condemnation due to them for all their sins, whether Before or After their Union with him: the which Service done for them is imputed to them, upon their believing in him; and from that moment is ever Upon them, never again disimputed. The truth is, the Curse would reduce them into the state of Bond-servants again, and so Un-son them; as Condemnation, and the Guilt of eternal Wrath, speak the sinner on whom they fall to be a Bond-servant, and not a son. Thus teach the holy scriptures, Gal. iii. 13. 'Christ 'hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made 'a curse for us. Chap. iv. 7. 'Wherefore thou art no 'more a servant, but a son.' Rom. viii. 1. 'There is 'therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ 'Jesus.' Isa. liv. 9. 'For this is as the waters of Noah 'unto me:' (which waters were a type of the flood of wrath, wherewith Christ the true ark was tossed, 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.) 'For as I have sworn that the waters of Noah 'should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that 'I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.' Psal. lxxxix. 31, 32. 'If they break my statutes.---Then will I 'visit their transgression with the rod.'

7. Here is the fountain-head of sanctification thro' faith in Christ; which is the only true sanctification competent to fallen Adam's children, the spring of all holy obedience and good works to be found amongst them. A Sinful creature in a state of Servitude or Bondage, under the law or covenant of works, is a 'Bond-servant to sin:' For 'the 'strength of sin is the law,' 1 Cor. xv. 56. binding over the sinner To death, yea, binding him down Under death. And, being a Bond-servant to sin, he is in bondage to Satan too;

too; since the power of sin is his sceptre, whereby he rules over the children of fallen Adam. Hence, while the sinful man continues in Bondage under that covenant, sin retains its full force and sway over him; even as the vermin doth over the dead corps in the grave: so that he can neither Be truly good, nor Do any thing truly good. But the Holy Jesus becoming a Bond-servant under the law, in the room and stead of the Sinful creature, answered all the demands thereof; and, having finished the Service, was, of course, Freed from its yoke, which he had voluntarily taken on himself. Now, the sinner uniting with him by faith, Christ's service is imputed to him. Hence his Bondage under the law as the covenant of works is done away; and he partakes more abundantly of the promised life of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus: so the reigning power of sin and Satan over him is broken, and he dies unto sin and lives unto righteousness, in holy obedience to the law of the ten commandments, as a rule of life to him in the hand of the Prince of life. Thus unholy creatures 'are sanctified 'in Christ Jesus,' 1 Cor. i. 2. 'sanctified by faith,' Acts xxvi. 18. And this the Apostle plainly teacheth, Rom. vii. 5, 6. 'For when we were in the flesh, the motions of 'sin, which were by the law, did work in our members to 'bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered 'from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, that 'we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the old-'ness of the letter'

8. Here is the ground in law, for the perseverance of the saints; that they shall never fall away totally nor finally, but the Life given them, in their union with Christ, must needs be Eternal, never to die out, from the moment 'tis given, through the ages of eternity. For the Service upon which their Life depends, is completely performed by Jesus Christ; and the Life, which was the promised Reward of that Service, is actually bestowed on them in some measure: which Life, therefore, can never totally nor finally fail, without the failure of the promise, the true and proper Condition of which is Already fulfilled. Wherefore, the time of trial (in the sense of the first covenant) for life and salvation to believers, being now over, in the second Adam their head engaging in the Service; their Perseverance is as sure

as

as the faithfulness of God can make it. And thus the Apostle proves the Perseverance of the saints, Heb. x. 38. From the testimony of the Prophet, Hab. ii. 4. For, as the law saith, 'He that doth these things shall live:' so the gospel saith, 'The just by faith shall live:' as some valuable interpreters read this text, and, I think, rightly.

Lastly, Here is the only ground of their Right to, and upon which they are put in Possession of, Compleat Life and Salvation in heaven, namely, Christ's Works and Service performed for them, and pleaded by them in the way of believing. For what plea can one have for the hire or reward, either as to the right to it, or the possession of it, but the Performance of the Service upon the account of which it was promised? Now, Christ Alone performed That Service: therefore we cannot found our plea before the Lord for heaven's happiness, on any other ground but Christ's works and service. Paul renounceth all other grounds, and thinks himself very safe upon this Alone, while he desires to 'be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness,—but 'that which is through the faith of Christ,' Philip. iii. 9. For 'they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift 'of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ,' Rom. v. 17. And the great design of the contrivance of salvation was, 'That grace might reign through righteous-'ness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord,' ver. 21. There is a glorious 'recompence of reward,' that follows the saints Work and Labour of love: but the truth is, 'tis (properly and strictly speaking) the reward of the service of their Head, not of the service of their Hands.

Secondly, This doctrine, of Christ's state of servitude, is a most powerful incentive to Gospel-obedience; and being applied to one's self by faith, will be found to be a Spring of holiness of heart and life. And thus it may be improven. (1.) More generally. (2.) More particularly.

First, More generally, in two branches.

I. If ye have any part or lot in this matter of Christ's Service, let it be the business of your life to serve the Lord Christ: fix peremptorily and resolutely, 'As for me and 'my house, we will serve the Lord,' Josh. xxiv. 15. And devote yourselves to the Service of God in Christ, which is your reasonable service. Serve him in the duties of wor-

ship

ſhip, external and internal: ſerve him in ſecret, in your families, in the congregations of his people: ſerve him in firſt-table duties, and in ſecond-table duties: ſerve him in your civil actions, and in your natural actions; 'Whether there-'fore ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to 'the glory of God:' ſerve him in the ſeveral ſtations and relations wherein he has placed you: ſerve him in doing for him, and ſuffering for him, as he calls you. Set his holy law before you, in its ſpirituality and vaſt extent; and know that it is the rule and meaſure of the ſervice ye owe him. Look upon the ſervice Chriſt performed for you, and let it excite and animate you to ſerve him.

Here is a powerful Motive, to engage you to ſerve him. And, that it may have its due influence upon you to that effect, conſider,

1. He was in the 'form of God,' and God's Equal, who Served for you; ye were born in Bondage, under the law, Bond-ſervants to ſin and Satan, the worſt of maſters. If you 'look to the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the 'hole of the pit whence ye were digged;' and withal look unto the Son of God, leaving the Father's boſom, deſcending from his throne of majeſty, laying aſide the robes of his glory, and taking on the form of a ſervant, therein to ſerve for you: ye muſt needs be haled to his ſervice by the overcoming force of his believed humiliation, 2 Cor. v. 14. 'For the love of Chriſt conſtraineth us.'

2. He has No Need of your ſervice to him, but ye were in Abſolute Need of his ſervice for you. Tho' ye had remained bond-ſlaves to Satan for ever, the want of your ſervice, and all the diſſervice ye could have done the Lord of glory, could not have Hurt him; nor can your ſervice Add any thing to his happineſs, Job xxxv. 7, 8. But, without his ſervice for you, ye had periſhed for ever, ye had been bound hand and foot in utter darkneſs, for your breaking of the firſt covenant of ſervice. Are not ye and your ſervice then wholly his? And, if ye believe ye had periſhed eternally unleſs he had ſerved for you, can ye refuſe him your ſervice?

3. The ſervice he performed for you was Hard ſervice: the yoke he puts upon you is Eaſy, and the Burden Light, Matth. xi. 30. He ſerved as a Bond-ſervant for you; he

requires

requires you to serve him as a Son serveth his father, Mal. iii. 17. If his people make their own service harder, they owe it not to his Spirit, but to their own spirit, or a worse, Rom. viii. 15. 'For ye have not received the spirit of bondage 'again to fear. No less than obedience, every way perfect, could be accepted at his hand: but he'll graciously accept sincere obedience attended with many imperfections, at your hand. He had a Hot Service, a hot Working service, a hot Fighting service, for you, in the fire of the wrath of God, which burnt against him, as standing in your room. Behold him in the garden, in a cold night, sweating great drops of blood at his service! behold him on the cross, at once grappling with the Father's wrath, the rage and power of devils and men! and hear him calling for your service on that very score, Cant. v. 2. 'Open to me—for my head is 'filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.'

4. His service being finished, he is now, in consequence thereof, Exalted to be Lord of All, Philip. ii. 9, 10. 'Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given 'him a name which is above every name: that at the name 'of Jesus every knee should bow.' He is now crowned king in Zion; and all are solemnly commanded by the authority of heaven to submit to him, and serve him, to 'kiss 'the son,' Psal. ii. 12. Our Joseph, who was sold for a Servant, is now brought forth of the dungeon, and made ruler over all the land: he rides in the second chariot, and 'tis cried before him, 'Bow the knee.' His sheaf now stands upright: let all his brethren bow down before him, even to the earth. Behold him, O believer, who served for thee in the character of a Bond-servant, now highly exalted, all power given unto him in heaven and in earth: behold him sitting on the right-hand of the throne of majesty, Commanding thee to the broad law of the ten commands, the Eternal Rule of righteousness; and strictly Binding thee to obedience thereto, by the authority of God thy Creator and Preserver; and with the additional tye of his Mediatory Authority, his Right of Redemption over thee, and his Dying Love to thee, which may well supply the place of the bond of the covenant of works, and the curse, the only tye unto obedience which he hath taken from off thee by his service.

5. Christ

5. Christ served his hard and sore service for you, to this very end, that ye, being delivered from your bondage and slavery under sin and the curse, 'might serve him in holiness 'and righteousness,' Luke i. 74, 75. It was for this end the Lord Jesus undertook his service for you: why would ye then go about to frustrate the end of your Redeemer's undertaking for you? is this your kindness to your friend? 'Tis unthankfulness with a witness, to refuse him your service, to which ye are bound by the strongest ties of gratitude for the greatest favour from your best friend.

6. Your service is Dear-bought: grudge it not. 'Tis the price of blood, the blood of the Son of God, 'Who gave 'himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, 'and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good 'works,' Tit. ii. 14. Serving of the Lord is a precious Privilege, as well as a Duty; for 'tis a part of heaven's happiness, Rev. xxii. 3. 'His servants shall serve him.' Ye were in bondage to sin and Satan, which would not Permit you to serve the Lord; until Christ by his service, took their yoke from off your necks. Ye were in bondage under the Curse, that no service to God could be Accepted at your hand; till ye were relieved thro' Christ's becoming a curse for you. Ye were bound hand and foot, yea, Dead in trespasses and sins, that ye could not serve the Lord; until his precious blood set you free, and his death gave you life and strength. And shall your service, the purchase of blood, be withheld from the glorious purchaser? So far as it is so, 'tis doubtless owing to unbelief. O believer, look to the cross of Christ, and behold how he paid for every good Work, every good Word, yea, every good Thought of thine. There is not one of these found, or that shall be found with thee, through the ages of eternity, but it springs from the Merit and never-failing Efficacy of Christ's Service. And, had not the Lord Jesus taken on him the form of a Servant for us, there had never been One piece of Acceptable service to God, one good work, word or thought found among the children of men, after the breach of the first covenant.

7. There is a glorious and full Reward, gained by Christ's service, awaiting all his servants at the end of their course; even the full enjoyment of God in the other world; in

which ye ſhall be completely happy for all eternity, 1 Theſſ. iv. 17. 'So ſhall we ever be with the Lord.' 1 John iii. 2. 'We ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is.' Our Lord Jeſus having run in the name and on the head of the bleſſed company, the deſigned heirs of glory, and having won the prize for them all; now ſits on a throne at the end of the race, with the prize in his hand, calling you to make haſte and follow him, and to Run ſo, in faith and obedience, 'that you may obtain,' 1 Cor. ix. 24. 'Have re-'ſpect to the recompence of reward,' Heb. xi. 26. Set and keep your eye upon it all along your ſervice, as a Won Prize, and won For You, by the Great Servant: and let the Hope of it excite, animate and encourage you to the hardeſt pieces of ſervice in your way towards it. The time is but ſhort: wherefore, tho' your ſervice be Difficult, it will not be Longſome. And the glorious reward will more than counterbalance all your toil. And remember, that According to your Works in his ſervice, ſo will your ſhare of the Reward be, greater or ſmaller, 2 Cor. ix. 6. 'He 'which ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap alſo ſparingly: and he 'which ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap alſo bountifully.' The reaſon is, becauſe both our Service to God, and our Reward, are Purely and Equally the Fruits of Chriſt's Service for us; and ſo they are proportioned to the Efficacy of It in us: wherefore, according to the Efficacy of Chriſt's Service in us, ſo will our Service be, and ſo will our Reward be; and ſo, the Greater Service, the greater Reward.

8. If ye do indeed belong to Chriſt, as theſe for whom He ſerved, ye Shall certainly ſerve him. For, if he was crucified for you, your old man was nailed to the ſame croſs with him, that ſin might be deſtroyed in you, and you might ſerve him; Rom. vi. 6. 'Knowing this, that our old man 'is crucified with him, that the body of ſin might be de-'ſtroyed, that thenceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin.' And your Service is a part of the Reward of His Service, which he cannot loſe; for he has his Father's faithfulneſs engaged for it, in the promiſe of the covenant made to him, Pſal. xxii. 30. 'A ſeed ſhall ſerve him;' they ſhall ſerve him Sincerely here, and Perfectly hereafter. So that heaven and earth ſhall be overturned, and the whole frame and courſe

of

of nature renverſed rather than one ſoul, for which Chriſt ſerved, be left in Bondage to its luſts.

Take heed then to yourſelves: for your deliverance from the bondage of your luſts, and your ſerving the Lord, is the neceſſary deciſive Evidence of your part in Chriſt, of any ſaving intereſt in him and his Service. If ye ſerve him in truth, his ſervice is yours, imputed to you for all the purpoſes of life and ſalvation. If ye ſerve him not, ye have neither part nor lot in that matter, but muſt periſh for ever, Luke xiii. 3. 'Except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe perish.' Rom. viii. 13. 'If ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die: but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live.' If ye be not his Servants, to ſerve him, ye are Slaves to the devil and your luſts; and ye ſhall die the Death of ſlaves for your tranſgreſſions: ye ſhall die a curſed death, under the curſe of the law, ſtaking you down under eternal wrath, from which ye ſhall never be able to lift your head: ye ſhall die a ſhameful death, ſtript of all covering whatſoever, the whole world beholding your ſhame: ye ſhall die a death painful beyond expreſſion, through revenging wrath, like Nails and Spears, piercing into your very ſouls: and ye ſhall die a lingring death, ſpun out through all the ages of eternity.

Laſtly, By Chriſt's ſervice there is Strength purchaſed, wherewith ye may ſerve him; and it lyes open to you, to be improved in the way of believing, for enabling you to your work, Iſa. xlv. 24. 'Surely, ſhall one ſay, In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.' The ſervice which the Lord Jeſus took off our hand upon himſelf, namely the Bond-ſervice, was what we neither had nor could have ſtrength for. Strength for the Suffering part of it man never had; ſtrength for the Working part of it man once indeed had, but now 'tis loſt. Hence theſe who continue in the Bond-ſervice ſtill, under the law or covenant of works, can work none at all: they can work no work truely good and acceptable in the ſight of God. And 'tis vain, upon that view, to bid them work, without directing them, in the firſt place, to get in to Jeſus Chriſt, from under that covenant. But now the Mediator has purchaſed a New Stock of ſtrength, for the New Service which he puts in our hand; and 'tis lodged in himſelf, treaſured up in him as the head of

of influences: and in the faith of it we are to set about our work, 2 Tim. ii. 1. 'Thou therefore, my son, be strong 'in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.' So shall we be enabled for the hardest service required of us, Philip. iv. 13. 'I can do all things through Christ which strengthneth me.' Come then, and resolutely ply the service he calls you to.

II. If ye have any part or lot in Christ's service, serve him as Sons and Daughters: serve him 'as a son serveth his father,' not as a Bond-servant serveth his master. If thou art in Christ, 'thou art no more a servant' (*i. e.* a bond-servant) 'but a son,' Gal. iv. 7. Serve him then agreeable to the character ye bear before him. As it is your Duty, so it is your high Privilege, that ye have access to serve him in that manner. 'Tis the price of Christ's blood; slight it not. He served as a Bond-man, that ye might serve as Sons. Ye had been Bond-servants for ever, had not the Son of God become a Bond-servant for you, being 'made under the law 'that ye might receive the adoption of sons,' Gal. iv. 4, 5. And indeed he only was fit to serve God in that character: none else was able to have managed it acceptably. Wherefore,

1. Serve him out of Love to him: let your work and labour be a 'work and labour of love,' Heb. vi. 10. Behold the Son of God serving a hard service in your stead, from Love to his Father, and Love to you who were altogether unlovely: and let the Love of Christ constrain you to obedience. Believing views of Christ in the form of a Servant will produce this constraining love, 2 Cor. v. 14. 'For the 'love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that 'if one died for all, *&c.*' They will also prevent your acting from a Slavish fear of punishment, and a Servile hope of reward, both of them unbecoming the state of Sonship, 2 Tim. i. 7. 'For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; 'but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.' As, on the other hand, they will fill you with a filial fear of God's fatherly anger, and a son-like hope of the purchased and promised reward.

2. Serve him Universally, so as ye may 'stand perfect 'and compleat in all the will of God,' Col. iv. 12 The spirit of adoption brings men unto this evangelical perfection: but a sinner serving God in the state of Bondage will never comply

comply with the whole will of God; but there will ſtill be exceptions lying in the heart of ſuch a one againſt ſome one or other place of commanded ſervice. This is evident from the pſalmiſt's teſtimony, Pſal. cxix. 6. 'Then ſhall I not be a-'ſhamed, when I have reſpect unto all thy commandments.' Serve ye the Lord then as Sons, ſticking at no piece of ſervice commanded you, however painful, coſtly, or dangerous: for at this rate Chriſt ſerved for you, ſparing neither pains nor coſt, and ſticking at no danger.

Laſtly, Serve him Conſtantly, even to the end, Pſal. cxix. 112. 'I have inclined mine heart to perform thy ſtatutes al-'way, even unto the end.' It argues the Spirit of a Sinner in the ſtate of Bondage, to ply the work no longer than the Whip is held over one's head, or than one has ſomething to Gain to himſelf by his work, Job xxvii. 10. 'Will he de-'light himſelf in the Almighty? will he always call upon 'God?' Shew yourſelves ſons of God, by cleaving to his ſervice Continually, and never going back again to your old maſters. Remember him who was Obedient even unto Death.

Secondly, and more particularly, If ye have any part or lot in this matter, let the ſame mind be in you which was in Chriſt Jeſus, who for you took on the form of a Servant.

1. Be of a loving and charitable diſpoſition towards your brethren the ſons of men. Be concerned for the good of others, as well as for your own. Lay aſide all hatred, malice and revenge, envy and grudge at the good of others, as ever ye would ſhew yourſelves partakers of the Spirit of Chriſt. Love your neighbour as yourſelves. Let the love that Chriſt ſhewed to his Father and to mankind, in taking on the Form of a Servant in man's nature, inſpire you with this Love.

2. 'As ye have opportunity do good,' and be ſerviceable 'unto all men, eſpecially unto them who are of the houſe-'hold of faith,' Gal. vi. 10. Whether they be good or bad, withhold not ye the good that is in the power of your hand to do them The Father ſet his love on a ſelect company of mankind; but they behoved to be redeemed, to be bought from deſtruction with a price: and no ſooner was it propoſed to the Son to do this for them, but he conſented to do it, and to take on him the form of a Servant for that effect. If the ſame mind be in you that was in Chriſt, it will not divert you from doing good to men, tho' you are

nothing

nothing obliged to them, they are unworthy of kindness, have done wrong to you, and ye cannot expect compensation from them. Could any or all of these arguments have prevailed with the Son of God to withhold his helping hand from us, we had been all under Bondage to this day, without hope of relief. And let it move you to do good to the Saints in a special manner, that they are the persons in particular for whom Christ took on him the form of a Servant.

3. 'Put on bowels of' humanity, Mercies and compassion towards those who are in distress, Col. iii. 12. A selfish and untender dispositiion, void of sympathy with those in misery, is most unlike that mind which was in Christ Jesus, who, in his pity towards miserable sinners, laid aside the robes of his glory, and took on him the form of a Servant, that he might relieve them. But 'he shall have judgment without mercy, 'that hath shew'd no mercy,' James ii. 13.

4. Shew a strict regard to Justice in your dealings; and be conscientious in giving every one his Due. 'Twas from regard to Justice, and that the service due unto God from the elect, in virtue of the original contract, might be performed, that Jesus Christ took on him the form of a Servant, and made out the Service.

5. Be Humble, and Condescend to low things necessary for the good of others. For this we have the example of God's Equal, taking on him the form of a Servant; which may fill the faces of the proud and selfish with shame and blushing, John xiii. 14, 15. 'If I, then your Lord and 'Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one 'another's feet. For I have given you an example, that 'ye should do as I have done to you.'

Lastly, Be Mortified to the ease, pomp and splendour of the world. Be ready, at God's call, to forego the comforts of a present life, in the believing prospect of a better; 'Looking unto Jesus, who, for the joy that was set before 'him, endured the cross, despising the shame:' and sit down contented, tho the world should neither give you its good word, nor its kind look. All the time that our blessed Lord Jesus Christ was in the world, from his birth to his burial, he was in it in the character of a Bond-servant; and accordingly had but coarse entertainment, hard lodging, being held in no reputation, and at length buffeted, scourged and crucified.

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